GUIDE TO THE SP23 TRUMAÍ FILE

In the 1880's, when visited by Von den Steinen, the Trumaí were located in two villages, one on the left bank of the Kuliseu River between the Auetõ and Yaulapiti, and the other on the right bank of the lower Kuluene River, north of the Mariape-Nahukwa (latitude 12° 30' S., longitude 54° W.), at the headwaters of the Upper Xingu River in Brazil. Evidently, the Trumaí were reduced to a single village by the time of Quain's fieldwork in the 1930's. The Trumaí language is of an isolated linguistic stock, incorporating within it a good many words from their neighbors the Kamayurá and Auetõ.

Subsistence was based primarily on slash-and-burn agriculture, supplemented by fishing, hunting, and the gathering of wild fruits and turtle eggs. The principal native crops grown included bitter manioc, maize, and sweet potatoes, with subsidiary crops of beans, peanuts, peppers, squash, sugarcane, a species of pineapple, and bananas. Many of these cultivated plants were borrowed from neighboring peoples. Men did the clearing of the land and planting of the crops, while the women did the rest of the agricultural work.

Although the Trumaí traded among themselves, the most important exchanges were made on the intertribal level, especially with the neighboring Kamayurá. The Trumaí exchanged stone axes, and in later days salt made from burning a species of water lily, for pottery and bows. Other items of Western and native manufacture that entered into active exchange were feathers, fishhooks, line, cotton yarn, cloth, paper, beads, and trinkets.

All land and productive resources were communal property and the right to exploit them resided with any individual willing to expend the labor. To the Trumaí the only important property was in the personal possession of transportable, material artifacts. Transmission of property was accomplished through trade and gift, for inheritance seems to have been related to the succession to the chieftaincy by a son and the possession of certain songs at the "ole" (manioc) ceremony. These songs were inherited through a mother's brother or a mother's father.

The village, which was the primary political unit among the Trumaí, consisted of several elliptically shaped houses with arched grass-thatched roofs extending to the ground. These houses were arranged roughly in a circle around a central plaza. Each dwelling was occupied by a number of families, each having its own section of the house and its own fireplace, and was governed by a household elder. In the center of the plaza was the men's gathering place, consisting of a log bench and a fireplace. This plaza served not only as the center of Trumaí social life, but also as the village burying ground.

The population of the village visited by Quain in 1938 was forty-three, including three foreign women in residence and excluding a few Trumaí living with other groups. Villages were politically autonomous units, each under the authority of a headman assisted by two vice chiefs who governed in his absence. The Trumaí chief, whose authority was rather limited, did no work and had no garden of his own, for his main function in the society was to make work assignments for the villagers and to organize groups for collective hunts, fishing expeditions, or for tilling the soil. Succession to the chieftainship was patrilineal.

Marriage was forbidden between first cousins, classificatory cousins and with the sister's daughter. Polygyny, commonly sororal, was practiced. Lévi-Strauss notes that the levirate and some form of fraternal polyandry were also practiced. (Handbook of South American Indians, Vol. 3, pp. 321-348).

The lapse of many religious practices and the loss of interest in religion in general was a striking feature of this dying society when observed by Quain; the Trumaí themselves showed little regret for this cultural loss. Since many of the religious practices were borrowed from their Upper Xingu neighbors in the not too distant past, this indifference is not too surprising. Despite this decline of interest, however, the main outline of Trumaí religion was still discernible by Quain when he studied them in 1938. Shamanism, used in curing and for sorcery, was still practiced extensively, but it was simpler in form and supporting ideologies than it had been formerly. Ceremonialism was related to subsistence (the "ole" or manioc ceremony) and to curing. The shaman's individualized power resulted in a specialization of religious functions as did the individual ownership of ceremonial songs and dances.

Only one source (1: Murphy and Quain) has been processed specifically for the SP23 Trumaí file. This English language monograph provides both excellent primary and secondary data on Trumaí ethnography. These data are supplemented by extensive, primary ethnographic material pertinent to this group derived from the account of Von den Steinen, which was processed mainly for the SP7 Bacairí file. It should be noted that the entire text pages --the 116 slips-- for sources 1 and 2: Steinen will be found only in category 116 of the SP7 Bacairí file. Similarly, the complete text of the Petrullo source (3: Petrullo), from which data pertinent to the Trumaí appears here, will

be found in category 116 of the SP8 Bororo file.

In 1: Murphy and Quain, Murphy makes a posthumous analysis and interpretation of Quain's field notes of 1938. These data contain keen analyses of the Trumaí personality, ethos, life cycle, and interpersonal attitudes and behavior, and adequate but less extensive accounts of their material culture and religion. This is one of the few sources available on the Trumaí and may be the best on the social structure. With the incorporation of Von den Steinen's data, two foci are apparent in this file, one being in 1884 when Steinen observed these people, and the second in the 1930's when Petrullo and Quain made their observations. The file was processed in 1965.]